

The United Reformed Churches of North America
Synod Wyoming 2016
Press Release #2 Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Opening Devotions

The second day of Synod Wyoming began with morning devotions led by the Reverend Ed Knott, minister emeritus of Bethany United Reformed Church in Wyoming, Mi. and the chairman of the 1st Synod of the URCNA that convened on October 1 of 1996. He took the grandfatherly privilege of reminding the delegates of the formation and organization of the United Reformed Churches in North America. Rev. Knott encouraged the assembly, stating: “I have believed from the beginning, brethren, that we are not an accident of history or a continuation of a protest movement. I think that God has given us a very special place, by His grace, at this time in history. ... I think that God is investing in us, as churches, a tremendous amount of grace, and we can not only be grateful for that, but respond in obedience.” Having read Philippians 1:27 and 2:1-11, he urged the delegates to seek the good of the churches through personal humility and by seeking, together, to glorify God the Father through Jesus, His Son. He closed his remarks with the admonition, “Remember, brothers, that we’re here to fulfill the joy of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.”

Ministerial Compensation

One matter the body dealt with in its morning plenary session was that of ministerial compensation. In connection with previous action taken by Synod Visalia, Synod Wyoming received a report from a study committee on guidelines for the honorable support of ministers and committed the report to the churches for study. An appeal regarding past decisions on ministerial compensation was recommitted to an advisory committee for further deliberations later in the week.

Ecumenical Relationships

One of the highlights of Synod is the expression of ecumenical relationships with other reformed denominations and federations from around the world. Wednesday morning’s session included an address from a fraternal delegate of the Canadian Reformed Churches encouraging a continued dedication to work toward ecclesiastical unity even while recognizing that obstacles remain on the path to merger. In connection with ecumenicity, an overture seeking to adjust the mandate of CERCUC was not adopted. Synod re-affirmed its desire and intention to continue pursuing ecumenical developments with the CanRC acknowledging that formal steps forward will not take place within the next six years. Furthermore, Synod Wyoming increased its ecumenical relationship with churches abroad by establishing Ecumenical Fellowship with the Calvinistic Reformed Church in Indonesia (GGRC-NTT), the Free

Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC) and the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA), in addition to maintaining Ecumenical Fellowship with the Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ) and the United Reformed Churches in Congo (URCC). The day gave the assembly opportunity to hear addresses from brothers of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia and the Reformed Churches of South Africa.

Overtures

Synod began its processing of numerous overtures by determining that the Proposed Joint Church Order submitted to previous Synods would need further substantial revision to bring it in line with our foundational principles of Reformed church government. However, Synod also determined that such work is not to be done until there is further ecumenical advancement with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Synod made this decision their response to numerous overtures requesting amendments of articles within the Proposed Joint Church Order as well.

Songbook

After a nearly twenty year process and having adopted Psalm selections at a previous Synod, Synod Wyoming adopted the proposed hymn selections for inclusion in a *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* and approved “the proposed *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* with the psalms approved by Synod.” Synod also determined that the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* would be published with the ecumenical creeds, the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards, with liturgical forms published in a separate stand alone book. Synod expressed deep appreciation for the ecumenical work of the construction of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It was with the hope that such decisions would bring God-glorifying praises from the churches that Synod recessed for the evening.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Greg Lubbers

Second Clerk of Synod Wyoming